

Claytonia

Newsletter of the John Clayton Chapter, Virginia Native Plant Society

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www.vnps.org/johnclayton

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On May 19, Ann Jurczyk will speak about about "Living Shorelines: Protecting Property, Saving the Bay"



Ann Jurczyk is the Virginia Outreach and Advocacy Manager for the **Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF)**. Her responsibilities include educating and engaging citizens for CBF's Save the Bay efforts and advocating for water quality legislation in the Virginia General Assembly.

Prior to joining CBF fulltime in 2010, Ann served as the organization's Clean Water

Campaign Organizer, rallying citizen support for clean water legislation pending in the U.S. Congress. She also is a graduate of CBF's Volunteers as Chesapeake Stewards program and, as a volunteer, headed a successful effort to fund and implement a living shoreline project that now protects 400 feet of James River shoreline in James City County, VA. Since joining CBF full time, she has completed many restoration projects, including designing and implementing buffers, vegetated swales, and rain gardens.



A "before" photo of the site on the James where CBF restored a shoreline
(Photos provided by our speaker)

Earlier, Ann spent more than twenty years as a marketing executive for an international software firm before shifting her focus toward “marketing the environment.” She holds degrees in landscape horticulture and English from North Carolina State University and lives with her family in the Williamsburg area.

The meeting begins at **6:45 pm** at the **Yorktown Public Library** at the intersection of Battle Road and Route 17 in Yorktown. **See you there!**

From the President

If you are into gardening, you are probably weeding like crazy trying to get things under control. Alas, you may, like me, work very hard thinking you are getting your garden in order, but it has a mind of its own. Soon you will see what really made it through the winter and what did not, as well as how the plants you moved and re-arranged all survived and how the new arrangement looks. I am picking up my copy of *Planting in a Post-wild World: Designing Plant Communities for Resilient Landscapes* by Thomas Rainer. I am still learning what to use under the native plants as filler so that they will hopefully discourage weeds and have a nice green look more in keeping with the way they like to grow in nature. Also I wish to get ideas of what plants will look good with each other. I have two pots of annuals (yes, a little eye candy) and was dismayed to see that the big box stores mostly sell the industrially composed hanging planters with no thought to beauty, color or logic. They do not sell the individual plants I would like to buy so that I can compose what plants to use in an arrangement that would appeal to me. With native plants, this year I am hoping to see the small ones in front and large ones in back that I moved last year. I hope I made less errors than last year...Oh, well—there is always next year. And who knows what will appear in the garden courtesy of the birds.

This weekend I will receive the last donation of trees and shrubs for our sale, which have to be have to be labeled and priced tomorrow. I already labelled the plants we purchased from our two sources as well as our donation of ferns. I think I must have written over a thousand name and price tags for our sale this year. Then I will have to finish the Plant Sale List for 2016 so that it can be printed in time for our sale. By the time you read this, our sale will be a thing of the past. The most important thing I can say is a great big THANK YOU to all of our volunteers. It is a big deal that you helped at a potting party, represented our chapter at the Williamsburg Home and Garden Show as well as



at the Living Museum's Garden Fest. Representing our chapter brings interest in Native Plants and educates the public about Native Plants and their importance to our environment. To those who helped set-up, hand out the Plant Sale list, explain about plants to buyers, check out customers, work as cashiers and carry plants to the cars, we thank you. It means we can continue as a Native Plant Society and send our campers to learn about nature. Thank you, everyone, for your help—together we make it happen.

Do you like working with numbers or handling spreadsheets? Please consider volunteering to be our next Treasurer, starting in November. It is an important part of our chapter because you will help guide our financial decisions and be a part of our Board. Being on the Board, you will have an opportunity to participate in our decisions and have an input in matters that concern our chapter. The Board meets six times a year from 5–7 PM at the Williamsburg Library. You would be asked to bring a treasurer's report on all incoming money and expenses for the past two months. You would also be expected to be a cashier at our Plant Sale. If numbers are not intimidating to you, please consider volunteering for this post. Let me or any Board member have your name so we can consider you.

There is no big report on the Native Plant Guides this time, as we had no meeting in April. In March we choose the plants to be included in the guide because they were native in our large area. We will meet in May to vote on plants we can realistically include in the list, as we had too many plants. I'll keep you informed on what happens next.

Lucile Kossodo

New Members

We welcome new members **Sarah Nystrom** of Williamsburg and **Cindy Andrews** of Henrico.

Notes from the board

Spring was right around the corner, and so was the annual plant sale, when the chapter's board met in March. The plant sale, as you may know, is the chapter's largest fundraiser. It requires a tremendous amount of work, and planning for it begins almost immediately after it ends every April. So thank you to all who have helped to make it a success, whether you came to potting parties, hosted a potting party, helped set up, provided excellent customer service or contributed in some other way!

The board had some big news in March, with the announcement that Helen Hamilton is working on a new book, this time on local ferns and mosses. She is requesting seed money from neighboring Native Plant Society chapters to offset costs of the initial print run, with plans to repay the chapters as the book sells. The board agreed to fund a third of the \$2,500 estimate with a loan to Helen.

The other big news is that Patti Gray was working with the Williamsburg Bird Club, the Historic Rivers Chapter of the Virginia Master Naturalists and the Williamsburg Garden Club in an effort to unite nature camp scholarship selection efforts. Up until now, the organizations have all funded nature camp scholarships with no coordination between them. A new committee was planned to create a joint application, share publicity and outreach efforts and select scholarship winners. The board wholeheartedly supported the idea and is excited about the new partnership. All thanks to Libbey Oliver and Patti Gray for taking the initiative!

Cortney Langley

Recent plant walks—

April 16: Weeds and Orchids walk

More than twenty people followed Donna Ware around a large open area in Freedom Park as she pointed out flowering plants scattered throughout the grass. She especially wanted to show us a tiny-flowered member of the bluet family, Southern Bluet (*Houstonia micrantha*), a more southern species only recently identified growing on several sites in our area. Interestingly, all of those locations are in county-maintained grassy areas, and Donna is working on a theory to explain their presence there. We then moved on to search the wooded areas bordering the mown fields, where we found many more native plants, including four orchids, two of them in bloom!

Here is a (more or less complete) list of plants the group saw during our walk:

Southern Bluets	Tiny Bluets
Virginia Plantain	Common Chickweed
Mouse-ear Chickweed	Starry Chickweed
Quaker Ladies	Pawpaw
Bigtooth Aspen	Puttyroot Orchid
Showy Orchis	Pink Ladyslipper
Mayapple	Golden Ragwort



Donna's Southern Bluets

Pennywort
Rattlesnake Plantain
Dissected Grape Fern
Broad Beech Fern
Field Horsetail

Spring Beauty
Rattlesnake Fern
Southern Grape Fern
Southern Adder's Tongue
Virginia Dwarf Dandelion

Louise Menges



A sampling of those seen in the woods—

Top left: a Pink Ladyslipper (*Cypripedium acaule*)

Top right: Field Horsetail (*Equisetum arvense*)

Bottom left: Showy Orchis (*Galearis spectabilis*)

Bottom right: Southern Grape Fern (*Sceptridium bitermatum*)

(Photos: Louise Menges)

April 23: A walk at Grafton Ponds

During a break in the thunder storms that began Friday afternoon, a group of 13 plant enthusiasts lucked out and were able to enjoy a sunny Saturday morning at the Grafton Ponds Natural Area Preserve in Newport News. The party began by observing the differences and

similarities in a number of ferns, starting with the upland bracken fern (*Pteridium aquilinum*) then continuing downslope to the creek where a smattering of cinnamon fern (*Osmundastrum cinnamomeum*), Eastern marsh fern (*Thelypteris palustris* var. *pubescens*), and common lady fern (*Athyrium filix-femina*) were found. Elsewhere in the natural area, sensitive fern (*Onoclea sensibilis*), royal fern (*Osmunda spectabilis*), Christmas fern (*Polystichum acrostichoides*), rattlesnake fern (*Botrypus virginianus*), broad beech fern (*Phegopteris hexagonoptera*), ebony spleenwort (*Asplenium platyneuron*), and the most abundant fern on the site, New York fern (*Thelypteris noveboracensis*), were also observed. Edie Bradbury later called in a sighting of several Southern adder's tongues (*Ophioglossum pycnostichum*), which we had missed during the walk.

As we started up the road toward the vernal pools and the promised showy orchis (*Galearis spectabilis*), the most noticeable feature was the recent clearing of the road bank and adjacent swath of forest. Bryan Barmore, a Virginia Master Naturalist who has been mapping the vernal pools in the area, explained that the clearing was conducted for gas line maintenance. The periodic maintenance of the roadside and bank is no doubt responsible for the presence of a number of open habitat and disturbance-dependant species such as azure bluet (*Houstonia caerulea*), forget-me-not (*Myosotis* sp.), purple cudweed (*Gamochaeta purpurea*), dwarf cinquefoil (*Potentilla canadensis*), early buttercup (*Ranunculus hispidus*), plantain-leaved pussy toes (*Antennaria plantaginifolia*), lyreleaf sage (*Salvia lyrata*), and common yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), which we observed along the road. Still, the level of disturbance and loss of vegetation was quite a shock.

Once in the woods, large numbers of wild comfrey (*Cynoglossum virginianum*) and violet woodsorrel (*Oxalis violacea*) covered the forest floor, though only a few were in bloom yet. A fair number of Jack in the pulpit, however, were in bloom, as was a small patch of bulbous bittercress (*Cardamine bulbosa*) that was seen along the swamp edge. Before long a couple small showy orchid blooms were found, and by the time we crossed through the woods to the vernal pool site, more than 25 orchids were counted in an area several times larger than I had originally thought



Golden ragwort



Showy orchis



Jack in the pulpit

they occurred in. A dense carpet of Japanese stiltgrass (*Microstegium vimineum*) occurs throughout portions of the site and will likely overtake the orchids given time. Other woodland species seen in bloom included primrose-leaved violet (*Viola primulifolia*), spring beauty (*Claytonia virginica*), and pennywort (*Obolaria virginica*).

Surprisingly, of the three ponds found immediately adjacent to the road, only one held water, even after the torrential rainstorms of the previous day. Few interesting grasses or sedges were fully emerged and only immature bladder sedge (*Carex intumescens*) and shallow sedge (*Carex lurida*) were identifiable.

Numerous frogs including American toad (*Anaxyrus americanus*), green treefrog (*Hyla cinerea*), leopard frog (*Lithobates sphenoccephalus*), gray treefrog (*Hyla versicolor*), and an eastern box turtle (*Terrapene carolina carolina*) were also seen and/or heard by the group.

Meegan Wallace

A report from the Plant Rescue Team

The native plant rescue team had beautiful weather for a rescue in Hampton on Sunday, April 24. The site is next door to the National Institute of Aerospace, not far from where the team conducted a series of rescues a few years ago before Commander Shepard Boulevard was extended. Like those, the rescue was arranged by NIA employee and native plant champion, Lise Schioler.

With only six people working, the team managed to fill a wagon and a truck with rescued material, including spice bush, wax myrtle, hearts-a-bustin', crane fly, jack-in-the-pulpit, highbush blueberry, pawpaw, royal fern and various other ferns. We were hoping to return the following weekend, but thunderstorms were forecast.

Most of the rescued plants will go toward two projects that have recently requested material. One is a six-month, ongoing restoration project at Presquile National Wildlife Refuge on the James River being



Bryan Barmore

A green tree frog (on a pawpaw leaf?)



The Rescue Team, from left: Judith Will, Ralph Will, Lise Schioler, and Travis Will. Not shown are Bill Wallace and Cortney Langley. (Note Lise's stylish work boots, left.)

coordinated by the Virginia Master Naturalists in coordination with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. The other is a partnership with York County Schools developing native plant and pollinator gardens. As of this writing, we are awaiting word whether there will be another opportunity to rescue in Hampton before development.

If you are interested in being notified about rescues, contact me at clangley@plantrescue.org or find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/Williamsburg.Wildflower.Rescue.Team.

Cortney Langley

Upcoming walks—

Saturday, May 21, 10:00 am: Moss Walk in Eden Woods

Moss Gardener **Norie Burnet** will lead our group through her lovely garden of trees, shrubs and perennials carpeted with 30 species of moss. Norie is well known for the artistic layout of her gardens and for her extensive collection and knowledge about mosses. **Meet at the Lightfoot Post Office at 8:30 am to carpool** to Norie's home in North Chesterfield, 1915 Montaigne Drive, Richmond, Va.

Contact Helen Hamilton for more information at 757-564-4494 or helen48@cox.net.

Saturday, June 4, 10:00 am: Marsh Plants

Join **Meegan Wallace** at **Sandy Bottom Nature Park, Hampton**, for a look at a wetland restoration and early summer flowering plants. Contact Meegan at 757-291-1099 to register and for more information about plants that will be seen.

Saturday, June 11, 10:00 am: Campus Tree Walk

Meet **Beth Chambers** at **Phi Beta Kappa Hall, 601 Jamestown Road**, for a walk around the campus of the College of William and Mary. Trees will have fresh leaves, and flowers will be in bloom in the Wildflower Refuge. Contact Beth at 757-221-2213 to register and for more information.

Saturday, July 23, 9:00–11:00 am: A Cool Ravine Bottom in Freedom Park with Donna Ware

Park near Go Ape. If it has rained recently, wear shoes you don't mind getting a little muddy. Bulbous Bittercress (in fruit), Great Blue Lobelia, Butternut (growing beside Black Walnut), Log Fern, and Skunk Cabbage will be among the plants we will see.

For information and to register, contact Donna at 757-565-0657 or dmeware@verizon.net.

Weeds or Lawn Flowers?

There can be a lot of advantages of growing wildflowers, a.k.a. “weeds” in a lawn or garden. While most are introduced, many bloom early in spring and will furnish nectar for insects that nesting birds need to feed young. A weedy lawn will grow on steep slopes and rocky areas where the habitat is difficult for turf. These low-growing annuals require no maintenance, no watering, no fertilizer, and will survive mowing, blooming even when a few inches tall.

Natives

Violets are one of the few Virginia native plants that do well as lawn weeds or ground cover; soon after blooming, the seeds that formed last year sprout new leaves. **Virginia Pepperweed** (*Lepidium virginicum*) has peppery seeds used to season soups and stews, and the young leaves are a healthy addition to salads or used as cooked greens. **Wild Pansy** (*Viola bicolor*) is attractive to many small bees and butterflies, including the fritillaries. **Dwarf Bluet** (*Houstonia pusilla*) and **Southern Bluet** (*Houstonia micrantha*) will cover large expanses of fields with soft blue-violet or a creamy white color. Both these tiny flowers offer nectar to tiny insects like hoverflies.

Introduced

Common Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*) is a familiar perennial weed with a long taproot and milky juice. The rosette of deeply divided bright green leaves is highly nutritious and many gardeners enjoy the early leaves in salads. Dandelion is a member of the Aster Family with no disc flowers, only rays (petals) which are visited by a variety of insects to feed on nectar and collect pollen.

Clovers (*Trifolium* spp.), members of the Pea Family, add nitrogen to the soil and are favorite foods for bees. Many species of birds and mammals feed on the foliage, flowers, and seeds of **White Clover** (*Trifolium repens*).

Other introduced weeds that appear in early spring are annuals—**Bird’s-eye Speedwell** (*Veronica persica*), **Hairy Bittercress** (*Cardamine hirsuta*), **Chickweeds** (*Cerastium* sp.), and **Field Madder** (*Galium sherardia*). These small plants are everywhere in spring, and usually die back in summer. They cover bare soil before favorite garden perennials emerge, and can be viewed as a free cover crop, their roots aerating the soil. Before these little wildflowers set seed in gardens, the whole plant can be composted.

Bulbous Buttercup (*Ranunculus bulbosus*) fill fields with golden yellow, while **Henbit** (*Lamium amplexicaule*) and **Purple Deadnettle** (*Lamium purpureum*) are the purple color all over meadows and along roadsides throughout the summer.

Invasive

There are 3 weeds that are extremely aggressive and highly invasive. Blooming April through June and then releasing copious amounts of seed, **Asiatic Hawk's-beard** (*Youngia japonica*) has a long taproot, difficult to pull when the plant is mature. The leaves in a basal rosette superficially resemble those of Common Dandelion but they are gray-green and the stems are hairy. The yellow flower is small and soon releases wind-blown seeds covered with white bristles. Unless the plant is removed when young, the seeds will sprout plants next spring in sun or shade, in gardens and sidewalk cracks.

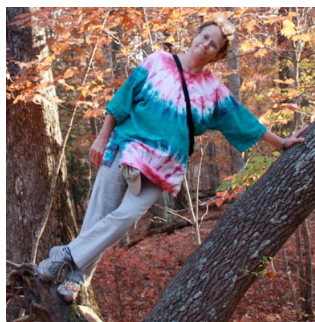
Mulberry-weed (*Fatoua villosa*) is a recent invasive weed, first reported in Louisiana in 1964, growing in greenhouses and nurseries, possibly spreading from topsoil containing the abundantly produced seeds. The seedling suggests mulberry, but the leaves and stems are densely hairy, and the plant will produce seed when only an inch or so tall. Appearing in mid-summer, it continues to produce seed through October. Hand-pulling before the seeds mature is the best control method in the home garden. All parts of the plant should be placed in the trash, not composted.

Asian Stiltgrass (*Microstegium vimineum*) has no redeeming qualities, forming extensive patches that overwhelm and eliminate other herbaceous plants. Deer will not eat this plant—it has no nutritive value—they browse on native plants instead, and the invasion of Stiltgrass increases. Wherever a light gap appears in the forest, or along a roadside, this extremely invasive plant is everywhere, and impossible to eradicate. The seeds live for years in the soil, and are inconspicuous at the tips of the stems in late summer. In the home garden, hand-pulling or mowing before seeds are produced is helpful.

While most spring weeds are more helpful than harmful, these last 3 are noxious invaders, and should be controlled wherever possible.

Helen Hamilton

Notes from left field



Pop goes the mushroom

Just when you thought it was safe to walk from the driveway to the front door...up pops a morel. Now, it's in a very-visible spot in the middle of the front yard, so I'm pretty sure this is its first year above ground. Did my husband plant it last year? Hmmmmm. Bought seeds at Home Depot? Hmmmmm.



When I took this photo and sent it to a few people, the unanimous reply was, “Eat it!” You’ve got to be kidding me! It’s the only one! For, as far as I can tell, 28 years (the time we’ve lived here and studied that garden). My Aunt Carol, an enthusiastic mushroom geek, said, “It’s a prize! Eat it!” I replied, “If you won the Nobel Prize, would you eat it? Huh?” End of that conversation.

Then, I mentioned it at the Clayton Chapter potting party for the Native Plant Sale. One person, who

shall remain nameless, but you know who you are, said, “they get ugly when they get older...kind of like a reproductive organ (not her actual words).” Okay, I get it. Shall I submit photos of it as it...shrivels?

It reminded my husband, Mac, of the VNPS Research Workshop we’d been to in March in Richmond. Two of the talks were about fungi! They said, among other fascinating things, that fungi extend the root system of trees, often by physically joining with the roots. And some trees are so picky that they won’t grow at all if the right fungal mix isn’t in place.

So now, when people say, “it’s going viral!” I think they’ll be lucky if it goes fungal. Not as sexy, but more deeply-connected. **Kathi Mestayer**

Photos from our 2016 Native Plant Sale on April 30

Although we were prepared for rain (remember last year?), this time the skies were more cooperative. Even better, we had record numbers of visitors at this year's sale! Treasurer Patty Kipps reports an estimated net profit of about \$4750.

Photos: Felice Bond, except where noted.



Helen Hamilton

Repotting and labeling at Joan Etchberger's. From left are Edie Bradbury, Judith Kator, Kathi Mestayer, Joan Etchberger (Co-chair), Daniel Keener, Patti Gray (Co-chair), Louise Menges, and Libbey Oliver.



Judith Kator, center, and Felice Bond, right, at a plant table



Nash McDowell, left, a 2016 Nature Camp Scholarship recipient, and Cortney Langley



We had a **lot** of Butterfly Weed for sale, and every plant was snapped up!



Helen Hamilton and Bill Morris



Patti Gray surveys our plant displays.



Tim Costelloe and Mary Turnbull take down tables after the sale.



Pat Baldwin, Joan Etchberger, and Lucile Kossodo at our site's entrance



At the cashier's table: Marilyn Johnson, Felice Bond, Nash McDowell, Joan Etchberger, Patty Kipps, and Mary Turnbull

John Clayton Chapter Calendar

Thursday, May 19 6:45 pm: John Clayton Chapter meeting at the **Yorktown Public Library**. Our speaker is **Ann Jurczyk**, Virginia Outreach and Advocacy Manager for the **Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF)**. Her topic will be **“Living Shorelines: Protecting Property, Saving the Bay.”**
(See Page 1.)

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(See Page 8.)

There may be walks in the works which did not make this issue, so keep a lookout for announcements about additional walks and other events on our website at www.vnps.org/john-clayton and in the local newspapers.

Below is a membership renewal form. Please contact Membership Chair **Fred Blystone** at 757/229-4346 or at fredblystone@gmail.com with questions about your membership.

Membership Form for John Clayton Chapter, Virginia Native Plant Society

(Place checks in the boxes below next to your selections.)

I am a ☐ **new member** of the John Clayton Chapter ☐ **renewing member** of the John Clayton Chapter

Name		
Address		
City	State	Zip
Email*	Phone*	
<input type="checkbox"/> I would like to receive my newsletters electronically at the email address above.		

Membership dues

☐ Individual (\$30) ☐ Family (\$40) ☐ Patron (\$50) ☐ Sustaining (\$100) ☐ Life (\$500)
☐ Student (\$15) ☐ Associate (\$40) —for groups who designate one person as delegate

I wish to make an additional contribution in the amount of \$ ☐ to John Clayton Chapter ☐ to VNPS

☐ This is a gift membership; please include a card with my name as donor.

I have ☐ time ☐ a little time ☐ no time to help with activities.

☐ I do not wish to be listed in a chapter directory.

**Please Note:* John Clayton Chapter does not distribute any of our membership information to other organizations.
It is used only by the officers and chairpersons of our chapter.

Make your check payable to **VNPS** and mail to: VNPS Membership Chair
400 Blandy Farm Lane, Unit 2
Boyce, VA 22610